

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 10-45 are pending. Claim 9 is canceled and the claims are amended. Applicants affirm the election of claims 1-32, 39 and 40.

Claims 1-32, 39 and 40 were rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants have carefully considered the comments concerning this rejection in the Office Action. The claims have been amended in response thereto.

It is believed that the amended claims are in full compliance with 35 USC §112.

Claims 1-32, 39 and 40 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Altieri. Favorable reconsideration of this rejection is earnestly solicited.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the features of claim 9, i.e., to specify that the starch of the foamed product has an intrinsic viscosity in DMSO at 30°C of from 0.3 to 1.5 dl/g. Altieri does not teach or suggest starch having the presently claimed intrinsic viscosity or any related parameter.

In Altieri, it is essential that the amylose content of starch is at least 45% in order to obtain desired properties of its foamed products. If a starch is used containing less than 45% amylose such as corn starch (25-28% amylose), waxy maize corn (0-1% amylose) and potato starch (23% amylose), the expanded products do not possess the uniform closed cell structure obtainable with the high amylose starches, but have a poor, relatively open cell structure and are brittle and easily crushable (see Example I and Table 1 of Altieri). In Example I, the various samples of starch containing varying amounts of amylose are extruded under the same conditions using the same type

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of extruder, with only the high amylose starches providing the desired cell structure, and the resilience and compressibility properties.

In contrast to the expectations from the teachings of Altieri, the claimed invention makes it possible to produce foamed starched products such as sheets or other partly-finished products using starches having intrinsic viscosity values within the range of from 0.3 to 1.5 dl/g. The present specification clearly indicates that either the starting starch material has the specified intrinsic viscosity value or can have an intrinsic viscosity higher than 1.5 dl/g provided that the intrinsic viscosity of the obtained foamed product is within the presently claimed ranges.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the claimed invention distinguishes over the cited art and defines patentable subject matter. Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action by applicants would be desirable to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned attorney.

A Revocation of Power of Attorney and New Appointment will be forthcoming.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Attachment: Petition for Extension of Time

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